

Cambridge Military Scrapbook 1946-1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty



*Queen inspects troops on
Market Hill, 1955*



*Ban the Bomb demonstration,
Market Hill, 1962*

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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

Cambridge Military Scrapbook 1946 to 1990

Note: there are similar Scrapbooks covering the period from 1897 – bit.ly/CambsCollection.

1946 06 12

Cambridge University Air Squadron ceases its wartime function and reverts to peace-time role as flying centre for undergraduates – photo – 46 06 12

1946 10 05

If atom bomb dropped over Perse School it would damage all houses between Homerton College and Castle Hill, Newham and Gas Works; soon anybody will be able to manufacture it in back garden – 46 10 05

1947 04 26

Next Thursday will see the opening of recruiting for the new Territorial Army. For a great many years our local voluntary commitments were more or less confined to the Cambridgeshire Regiment. The future however, holds out something much greater in scope and more varied. The total numbers to be recruited will be three times as many as in pre-war days. It is idle to suppose we do not regret the passing of our own Infantry regiment but the name and the traditions of the “Cambridgeshires” will live on in the 629 L.A.A. Regiment R.A. So will the spirit of our two war- time Sapper Companies live on in the 121 Field Engineer Regiment, while the General Hospital will have added a second Unit in the form of a Field Ambulance. 1947 04 26

1947 07 05

Many of the German Prisoners of War recently in the camp at Cambridge have been sent to other parts of the country, and I was shown this week a copy of the final issue of the 1025 camp newspaper. This starts with a farewell message by the C.O. (Major A.J. Ferris) who writes "I had hoped to retain the Company as such until repatriation thinned us right down but Higher Authority has ruled differently and now 1025 has to disband – you to work in agriculture and I go to civil life. The year of this Company's existence will I hope not be the worst of your time in captivity. I wish you all the best of luck when you eventually get back to your own country, and I hope that your return will not be long delayed" - Table Talk 47 07 05

1947 07 07

Men and women from all parts of Cambridgeshire attended the British Legion County Rally on Parker's Piece, Cambridge, on Sunday afternoon. In the course of an address the Rev J.N. Duckworth mentioned the presence of German prisoners of war amongst the crowd of onlookers and, welcoming them, said : "There is no enmity here". "We are", he went on, "living in very, very dangerous days. We are threatened with losing all those things for which we have fought and struggled, and for which we have endured. The friendship and comradeship of those several long years of war seem to be melting away. In their place there was fear and the seeds of distrust were being sown as never before. The word had reached a state where people, in modern parlance 'just couldn't care less' 47 07 07

1947 07 09

May I explain why St Matthew's Piece has not yet been restored to its former state. It was requisitioned by the War Department for a vehicle car-park. The surface and foundations were not suitable for such purposes and the military authorities were told that their vehicles would cause extensive damage to the playing area and would involve them in a heavy claim for compensation. When the War Department released the site the Corporation lodged a substantial claim for reinstatement. The claim has now been referred to higher authority for arbitration. My committee sincerely regret that the ratepayers of St Matthew's ward and their children in particular, have been deprived of the use of this ground for so long – letter from G.F.Nobbs, Chairman Cambridge commons and cemetery committee - 47 07 09

1947 07 24

Seven members of the Cambridge National Fire Service were at Addenbrooke's Hospital this morning suffering from slight burns from mustard gas sustained in dealing with a fire involving a truck-load of 60 112lb American gas bombs on the railway line between Six Mile Bottom and Fulbourn late last night. The main line between Cambridge and Ipswich was closed to traffic as a result of contamination over 100 yards. Later the damaged wagon was tipped off the rails to the side of the line. The truck was one of a train of 30 to 40 carrying mustard gas bombs from Warren Wood, near Thetford, to Barry in Wales, for dumping in the sea. As it passed through Six Mile Bottom the stationmaster saw that the truck was ablaze. The burning wagon, the third from the engine, was uncoupled, and the engine restarted to pull it away from there. An eye witness said to a "Cambridge Daily News" reporter: "It was a spectacular sight. About fifty per cent of the bombs exploded with a "whoosh" and a burst of flame which shot fifty feet into the air. Poisonous fumes spread over a range of fifty or sixty yards. The police afterwards sealed off an area around the blaze to await decontamination" 47 07 24

1947 08 30

More German PoWs - 1,300 prisoners & British staff being transferred en block from Radwinter Camp & will be replaced by 300 from Cambridge as plenty of jobs in factories & workshops here. Increased privileges allow PoWs to possess English money which spend here rather than credits in Germany. May not go more than five miles from camp usually. Privileges denied to ardent Nazis 2.28]

1947 12 04

New window in round Church replacing one bombed [3.2]

1947 12 20

The mustard gas bomb train fire at Six Mile Bottom last July had a sequel on Thursday when two L.N.E.R. drivers, Frederick Smart and William Thorburn, and two firemen, Joseph Westland and Alfred Chandler, all of Cambridge, were presented with the L.N.E.R. Medal. A special goods train included 40 open wagons of mustard gas bombs. When passing Six-Mile-Bottom driver Smart observed a fire in the third wagon. Fireman Chandler jumped down immediately and uncoupled the burning wagon from the rear part of the train. The engine then proceeded forward for 50 yards. The engineers tried to subdue the fire with buckets of water, fully aware of the dangerous nature of the contents of the wagon. 47 12 20

1948 04 10

Last production by German Youth Stage at Trumpington POW camp before they go home in June, to be given at Houghton Hall; amongst cast will be 4 British girls, acted in German - 48 04 10

1948 03 02

At seven o'clock this morning, in very dense fog, a lorry containing 11 German P.O.Ws. crashed broadside into a railway engine and brake van at an accommodation level crossing at Conington, Hunts. Three of the Germans were killed outright - and all the other injured. The injured were placed in another motor vehicle for transport to Peterborough Hospital but when only a few hundred yards down the road this vehicle crashed into a bus. Two more of the Germans have since died and some of the remaining nine are seriously ill. One of the dead is the German doctor who was tending the prisoners injured in the train crash - 48 03 02

1948 03 02

Several hundred people gathered round the flagstaff at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery for a simple service of benediction. The reason for the service was emphasised by the long rows of empty, tarpaulin-covered caskets bear the scene of the service - the caskets in which will be returned to the United States the remains of those American service men and women buried at the cemetery whose relatives wish their last resting-place to be at home. For this reason the cemetery is to be closed for a period, and for the purpose too of reburying the bodies of those interred in the now-to-be -closed

Brookwood and Lisnabrenny (Northern Ireland) American Military Cemeteries whose relatives wish them to rest in England - 48 03 02

1948 05 11

The watching eyes of Britain's air defence went into action on Sunday in the biggest-scale Royal Observer Corps activity in the district since the war. Observer posts were manned at Cherry Hinton, Linton, Caxton, St Ives, Abbots Ripton, Littleport and elsewhere following the movements of jet fighters, Spitfires, Lancaster and Lincoln bombers and other types of aircraft numbering over 100 aircraft put up by the RAF. At Linton I found the observers proud of their post, built at their own expense by their own labours during the war - 48 05 11

1948 06 08

Concern at the possibility of parts of Cambridgeshire countryside being taken over by the R.A.F. for practice bombing ranges was voiced at a meeting in Trinity College. They propose to set up practice bombing ranges at Babraham (near Duxford aerodrome), East Hatley (near Bassingbourn and Bourn) and North of Whittlesey. These ranges, it said, are used from time to time for dropping marker bombs only and when the red flag is flying and the footpaths across are blocked. At Babraham the range is crossed by two footpaths but the footbridge across the river is broken down - 48 06 08

1948 06 21

A rider that all P.O.W.s should be given regular instructions on the rules of the road in this country was given by a jury returning a verdict of "Accidental death" on Hryhorij Wolanskj, an Ukrainian POW of 85 POW Satellite camp, Barton Fields, Ely. John Ada of St Mary's street, Ely, said he saw the Ukrainian completely ignore the "Halt" sign in Downham Road and came straight across the road without looking, crashing in to a red motor van. Victim had been in the Ely camp since January 1948. The Camp Commandant stated that his records showed Wolanskj had received instruction in road safety at his previous base at Braintree. He must have known the meaning of the "Halt" sign as there was a large one just outside the camp - 48 06 21

1948 06 22

A squadron of the Royal Corps of Signals, Territorial Army, is to be raised in Cambridge. Its headquarters will be at the Saxon Works. It will be a direct successor to the Signals unit raised here in 1939, established in Station Road in August 1939. Major C. Loveday was the company commander and the Company served an important defence area during the war and soon acquired a first-class reputation for efficiency and reliability.. Men from this Company served in all theatres of war with considerable credit - 48 06 22

1948 07 21

The wartime defences in the eastern side of Cambridge are to go. The Cambridge Town surveyor reported that the Ministry was now prepared to reimburse the reasonable cost of the removal of the defence works and anti-tank ditch. The demolition of certain pillboxes was being carried out by Messrs J. Stevens & co, who were engaged in the removal of civil defence works in Cambridge - 48 07 21

1948 08 06

Six residents of Ditton Fields appeared before Cambridge magistrates charged with stealing varying amounts of timber from 89 Maintenance Camp (Squatter's Camp), Newmarket Road, the property of H.M. Government. Mr Harry Crowe, a civil engineer, said the sides of a number of timber huts had been stripped of all timber. One of the defendants said, "I have seen other people going up to the site, taking away timber, and not getting into trouble for it, so I thought it would be all right". Another said he was walking across the site of the Newmarket Road camp when two Irishmen working there stopped him and asked if he wanted to buy some timber. After he had paid £3 the man in charge took the timber from the huts which he understood had to be pulled down - 48 08 06

1948 08 30

In October 1947 the British Portland Cement Manufacturers returned to their headquarters in London from their war-time offices at their Saxon Works, Coldham's Lane, Cambridge, which were placed on the market for sale. The considerable possibilities of the property for use by the Territorial Army as a drill hall and training ground were readily apparent and after some negotiation, with the approval of the War Office, the T.A. Association acquired the freehold of the 25-acre site, together with the extensive buildings thereon at a price in excess of £35,000. The buildings include a large hall at present occupied by the Regional Petroleum Office - 48 08 30

1949 05 04

At 15 group operations room of the Royal Observer Corps in Newmarket road, Cambridge, 20 or 30 blue-dashed uniformed men and women took part in a big Observer Corps exercise. Everywhere the sharp-eyed observers at their remote posts reported aircraft in a formula giving the type, number and height. Meteors, Hornets, Messengers, Ansons, Skymasters and Lincolns were some of the aircraft spotted and plotted – the RAF boys doing their best to fox the spotters by hedge-hopping and 500 miles an hour - 49 05 04

1949 06 02

The Secretary of State for War, Mr Shinwell, states that there are 43 huts on the camp site at Donkey common, Cambridge. They were originally intended to accommodate three officers and 224 other ranks. There is now one Women's Royal Army Corps unit and a small detachment of Pioneers, comprising three officers and 76 other ranks in all - 49 06 02

1949 06 21

US Army Camp, Milton Rd unoccupied, built for 850 on war-time scale, 700 in peace, now holds 100 – 49 06 21

1949 06 10

Smuts unveils Perse war memorial – 49 06 10

1949 09 13

Many of the 200 Free Poles who paraded at Cambridge war memorial for a wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the outbreak of the last war, were in the Police forces which took the initial impact of the Nazi invasion of their country. The parade was representative of ex-army, navy and air force personnel who are now living and working in the Cambridge district. After mass at the Roman Catholic church, they marched to the memorial where Mr B.C. De Broekere – a cavalryman at the outbreak of war – laid a wreath - 49 09 13

1949 09 30

Large numbers of bombers during "Operation Bulldog" – 49 09 30 [1.12]

1949 10 12

Cambridge town council considered the proposed resiting of the war memorial. A scheme for a traffic roundabout at the Station Road junction means that if it were left in its present position it would be marred by the number of "Keep left" bollards and other traffic signs which would be necessary for the direction of traffic. An alternative position involved the acquisition of certain land fronting the Botanic Garden which would provide a restful haven away from traffic. None of the Servicemen's organisations was in favour of the removal of the War memorial from its present position - 49 10 12

1950 02 24

Because he disapproved of his daughter's association with a German prisoner-of-war a Gt Eversden man took out his 12-bore shotgun to try and scare the suitor off. His intervention was not a success. The police took away his gun and gave it to his son for safe custody until "the trouble blew over". The

German married his daughter and is now accepted as a son-in-law. This story was told in the court when father sued son for the return of the gun - 50 02 24

1950 04 24 4

Civil Defence recruiting week in Cambridge opened with a bang when thunderflashes were fired on the roof of the University Arms Hotel and volunteers and county firemen went into action to put out the "fire" caused by the "enemy's" bombs and rescue those trapped inside. A crowd of several hundred gathered on Parker's Piece to watch the exhibition - 50 04 24

1950 06 05

Riverside, Cambridge, was the scene of an occasion that was described as "a memorable little ceremony in the naval history of Cambridge". The training ship "Ganges" (brick built and on dry land) the new headquarters of the Cambridge Sea Cadet Corps was opened by Admiral Sir Wilfred Patterson and christened in traditional naval fashion with a bottle of champagne. During the inspection a number of cadets overcome by the effect of marching and the hot sun had to leave the parade. Two or three fainted and others were helped into the shade by fellow cadets - 50 06 05

1951 02 20

Cambridge Scientists anti-war group describe US atomic bases in East Anglia as "a disaster- make us a target" - 51 02 20

1951 04 26

"1939-45" added to War Memorial - 51 04 26 [4.2]

1951 05 28

US Cemetery salutes dead; originally 15 American cemeteries but after the War all bodies of men who not taken back home to America were removed to Madingley Hill - 51 05 28 [4.3]

1951 07 07

Honorary Freedom of Cambridge to US 8th Army Air Force - 51 07 07 [4.4]

1951 08 01

Stone of remembrance in honour of airmen unveiled in Newmarket Road cemetery - 51 08 01 [4.5]

1951 12 05

"If Cambridge is bombed" - Civil Defence plans - 51 12 05 [1.22]

1951 09 05

In common with other towns situated near American servicemen's camps, Cambridge is rapidly becoming one of the leading Black Market centres for disposal of duty-free tobacco purchased at U.S. canteens by G.I.s and subsequently sold at a handsome profit in small back-street shops and hotels, with no questions asked. This trafficking is difficult to stop and is now a well-established through unofficial "Big Business". Despite checks by security officers at Lakenheath and Mildenhall aerodromes car loads of cigarettes by the thousand are coming into the City - 51 09 05

1951 10 29

Air Ministry proposals to use the Stella Maris nursing home to accommodate members of an Inter-Services course learning Russian at the University was described as a "scandal". It was admirably equipped for use as a hospital, has accommodation for 40 patients, two completely equipped operating theatres and could relieve the 2,000-strong waiting list at Addenbrooke's Hospital. A proposal by the Ministry to acquire the Heritage guest house in Silver Street and 9, Newnham Terrace, Cambridge, had not gone through after college freeholders had 'dug their heels in' - 51 10 29

1951 12 05

Details of Cambridge's civil defence plan – a scheme in which there is a place now for “every man who can use a spade and every woman who can make a cup of tea” - were disclosed by the city's Civil Defence Officer at the weekly luncheon of the Rotary Club in the Dorothy Café. The most likely attack was by bombers carrying high explosive and incendiaries – an attack by no means rendered obsolete by the Atom bomb. If areas of the continental coast were occupied we would also be within rocket range. Chemical and biological warfare had to be considered including the use of a nerve gas absorbed by the skin. A network of wardens' posts would be established. “We think that by dispersal of our forces we can have some intact when they are most wanted and can bring aid to any stricken area with the least possible delay”, he said - 51 12 05

1952 01 08

The secretary of the Cambridge Scientist's Anti-War Group told what would happen if an atom bomb were dropped on the city. It could be assumed that 50,000 people would be killed and the same number injured by one bomb three times as powerful as that dropped on Nagasaki. It would mean that 85 percent of the people in Cambridge would be disposed of. Addenbrooke's Hospital would disappear and every building would probably be set seriously on fire. If shelters were provided the fatal casualties could be cut down to 14,000 and perhaps only 10,000 would be injured – but how could these be dealt with by the medical facilities? 52 01 08

1952 10 20

Full scale Civil Defence exercise – 52 10 20 [2.1]

1952 10

Peace Week climaxes in speeches at Guildhall, Oct [2.2]

1952 12 16

Cadets full scale Church Parade, St Catharine's College – 52 12 16 [2.3]

1952 01 26

The County Council considered the development of Swann's Lime Pits, Cherry Hinton, as an armament testing range and research establishment. Coun Rackham deplored the possibility of explosions taking place at the back of the adjoining school. As well as the noise the blast runs along the ground and shakes doors and windows. People have had to replace ceilings that have been shaken down. It was suggested the company use their explosives on the huts up Madingley Road where they would soon clear the ground and everything would be lovely. – 52 01 27

1952 03 12

Following a visit to Swann's Lime Pit, Cherry Hinton, city councillors raise no objection to its continued use as a small-calibre range for armour-piercing projectiles, providing that any additional buildings are erected in the deeply-excavated position and that nothing larger than a six-pounder gun is used – so long as it is fired only in the morning & preceded by a warning. 52 03 12

1952 03 14

The booming of a six-pounder gun in a Cherry Hinton lime pit found its echo inside the City Council chamber when some members protested against the use of Swann's pit as a Ministry of Supply small calibre range for testing armour-piercing projectiles in the middle of a built-up area. But Alderman Doggett said he had stood within three or four feet of the weapon and was not ‘disturbed’ – “although it was true we had our fingers in our ears. There is really very little we can do and it wouldn't be of much use objecting”, he said. – 52 03 14

1952 04 26

Two large huts have been erected on a piece of waste land at the top of Castle Street, Cambridge. They are to be an Anglo-American and Allied Services Club which is being started at the request of the American Service authorities to provide servicemen of other countries with somewhere pleasant to

go when they are in Cambridge. There are two very big rooms which have been tastefully and brightly decorated and provided with old furniture renovated by the W.V.S. One will serve for games of various kinds and the other for dancing. There is to be a snack bar and that “must” for Americans, a juke box – 52 04 26

1952 04 30

Miss Lillian Bourn will be remembered for her work during the war with the American Red Cross. She was Supervisor of Hospitality at their Bull Hotel club and coped with the countless American soldiers visiting Cambridge. In fact she married one of them. The romance began when her husband, who sings, went into the Bull and asked her if she could find someone to accompany him. “I was able to do so and that’s how it started”, she said. Her home is now in the university town of Evanston, Illinois. – 52 04 30

1952 05 03

The Foreign Secretary, Mr Anthony Eden opened the Anglo-U.S.A. and Allied services Club on Castle Hill, Cambridge. A year ago the city council was approached by the Women’s Voluntary Service with the object of providing the site for the club. Since then much work had been done by the W.V.S. together with valuable assistance of the U.S. Air Force and the Air Ministry. The club will be open every evening during the week and, Mr Eden said, will lure out American Service men from the attractions of their camps so they could learn “what extraordinary animals the English are” - 52 05 03

1952 06 21

Mr Lloyd Stokes, owner of land at Trinity Hall Farm, Milton, said there were 140 armoured vehicles on the land waiting to be shipped. He wanted an access from Green Park because he had a number of tanks coming through the back and wished to enlarge the front entrance on to Milton Road. It was dangerous and an agricultural machine such as a 12-foot combine could not get through. The County council suggested the city should buy this piece of land and put there light industry, not likely to cause any nuisance. - 52 06 21

1953 04 29

On May 2nd the W.V.S. Anglo-American Service Club on Castle Hill, Cambridge, will be one year old. Activities include two dances a week; there are now 125 lady members who serve as dance hostesses and a waiting list has been opened for further applicants. Tours are arranged for all the American bases and there is a monthly party for convalescent patients from Wimpole Park Hospital and occasional teas for parties from Ely R.A.F. Hospital. - 53 04 29

1953 05 01

“I think it is a lot of hooey”, said Coun Cox when the Cherry Hinton firing range was discussed. He thought complaints of the amount of vibration from a six-pounder gun – not much larger than an anti-tank rifle – which was fired at the range, were “stupid and fantastic”. But Coun Finbow said that recently the whole of the ceiling in one of his bedrooms collapsed because of the vibration. One neighbourhood should not be subject to range firing morning, noon and night. The council approved the use of the site by the Ministry of Supply for a period of three years 53 05 01

1953 05 07

Sir –Some of the explosions from the six-pounder gun at Cherry Hinton firing range did crack walls, move brickwork, bring down plaster, crack windows and scare children, adults and animals. Now two schools are to be built almost on the doorstep and if we have similar explosions there will be damage done. When doors rattle, knockers chatter, cracks appear and are repaired, only for the plaster to be shaken out again we are at liberty to be concerned. – J.S. Read 53 05 07

1953 06 10

A House of Commons committee considered the question of allowances for naval students at Cambridge University. Officers go to Dartmouth for two terms and then go to sea before being sent to Cambridge where they read the Mechanical Sciences Tripos for three years. During the long vacation they are put to work in industries around the countryside. On the completion of their Cambridge course with a degree they enter the electrical school at Farnham. The Chairman asked how their pay was affected when at Cambridge and did they receive an allowance in addition, so they did not become 'broke'. They must have something in the way of an allowance. - 53 06 10

1953 06 26

Many people know something of the good work done by the 'Food Flying Squads' known as the 'Queen's Messengers' during the last war. But these convoys must be ready to go anywhere where an emergency has arisen and W.V.S. members must be trained. Thus providing the mid-day meal for youngsters at Cherry Hinton Day Nursery provided practical experience for the crew of the convoy maintained at Cambridge. They provided minced meat, potatoes and cabbage, followed by rhubarb pastry and custard for the 60 under-fives which was cooked on Soyer-boilers. - 53 06 26

1953 07 07

If a vital target in Cambridge, such as the gasworks, received a direct hit during an enemy air attack, the Civil Defence Experimental Mobile Rescue Columns would swing into action. It has its own kitchen and communications system, including wireless and telephones and is equipped to deal with any emergency. It consists of 150 men split into 15 rescue parties, each having an up-to-date rescue vehicle. Their visit was only an overnight halt but many members of the public were attracted to the scene and it was obvious they had not expected to see such up-to-date equipment and quiet efficiency. 53 07 07

1953 08 29

Eastern Regional Food Office to closes in November after 14 years – opened at Corpus at beginning of war , moved November 1945 to Brooklands Avenue – 53 08 29 [4.7]

1953 10 19

Ely Cathedral Memorial dedicated, October – 53 10 19 [4.8]

1953 10 20

This is Home Guard recruiting week with the object of increasing the size of this vital branch of our reserve army. When the Government decided it was necessary to resuscitate the Home Guard it was appreciated that the task was a difficult one. The appeal was directed towards middle-aged men who had previously seen service. The exceptional commitment of the Regular Army abroad made it imperative that there should be an organised body trained and ready to cope with emergencies in the event of war. It must contain people who know the local geography of their area intimately, in every parish and hamlet. 53 10 20

1953 10 27

Cambridge citizens were shaken to hear rifle fire in the city and see groups of khaki-clad men dashing about on Jesus Green and Parker's Piece. Members of the Cambridge Home Guard were carrying out exercises, culminating in an attack on Hobbs Pavilion where the 'enemy' was wiped out. The exercise served the purpose of bringing the Home Guard to the notice of the public. - 53 10 27

1954 07 30

Cambridge councillors discussed the impact of any explosion of a hydrogen bomb on the city. There would be an area of total destruction three miles immediately below the bomb burst with a radius of ten miles of lesser destruction. Civil Defence was a misnomer: they would not seek to construct a deep shelter to provide protection for the people of Cambridge in the event of war; it was not 'protection' but 'rescue and aftercare'. It was obvious that local telephone communication between

the Controller – if he still existed – and the locality would be useless. The only way Cambridge would be helped was by a rescue column arriving from another part of the country- 54 07 30

1954 09 20

A new Civil Defence rescue training centre was opened in Newmarket Road, Cambridge. There are two tumble-down structures – a façade and a rescue set – and volunteers set to work showing rescue attempts in an Atomic-bomb war. Major-Gen Bruce said: “In view of the present threat, where we needed one volunteer before we now want 100. It is un-British to have the attitude of mind that we are going to be frightened and blackmailed into putting up with might”. Heavy explosives and incendiaries are likely to go out of business, but not in the first two years of another war, because our enemy has a tremendous amount of aircraft and bombs that he will want to use – 54 09 20

1954 09 21

A man was killed when two 1,000-lb bombs exploded at RAF Marham. The bombs were being moved in preparation for an exercise when they fell from a trailer he was towing with a tractor. Five other airmen were injured and nine Canberra twin-jet bombers and one Anson aircraft were damaged. Eight of the Canberras can be repaired on the station. 54 09 01

1954 09 27

Imagine a Hydrogen bomb has been dropped on Cambridge. In a five-mile radius from Great Shelford to Histon everything is just rubble. In a 12-mile radius, including Saffron Walden, Newmarket and Huntingdon, there is severe damage and for 20 miles, as far as Bishop’s Stortford, there is minor damage. Blast and heat flash from the bomb could also cause severe burns to people exposed in the open and if the bomb exploded on the ground or in water mud thrown up would be very radio-active and would be carried for many, many miles. But if an ‘ordinary’ atom bomb was dropped the centre of destruction would be only a half-mile radius. Over 1,000 Civil Defence volunteers took part in Exercise Challenge on Midsummer Common, Cambridge. The Home Secretary, Sir David Fyfe told them that if a hydrogen bomb should fall there would be a great deal to do in the perimeter zone and the country beyond. People who lost their homes must be fed, housed and catered for. But outside the common a dozen members of the Cambridge Peace Front held banners saying: ‘There is no defence against the H-bomb’ 54 09 27

1954 10 22

Imagine a Hydrogen bomb has been dropped on Cambridge. In a five-mile radius from Great Shelford to Histon everything is just rubble. In a 12-mile radius, including Saffron Walden, Newmarket and Huntingdon, there is severe damage and for 20 miles, as far as Bishop’s Stortford, there is minor damage. Blast and heat flash from the bomb could also cause severe burns to people exposed in the open and if the bomb exploded on the ground or in water mud thrown up would be very radio-active and would be carried for many, many miles. But if an ‘ordinary’ atom bomb was dropped the centre of destruction would be only a half-mile radius. CDN 22.10.1954 [2.4]

1954 11 09

British military officers and civilian personnel from the Lakenheath air base witnessed a ‘Skysweeper’ firing demonstration at Weybourne range, Norfolk. This is the U.S. army’s largest calibre automatic anti-aircraft artillery weapon – an artillery machine gun. It is the first weapon with radar, computer and gun on one carriage with fully integrated gun and fire control. The units are designed to spot and track with radar and aim and fire the gun semi-automatically at enemy aircraft flying near-sonic speeds at low and medium altitudes. CDN 9.11.1954

1954 12 15

Trumpington industrial hostel is one of the few remaining hostels opened in 1947 to accommodate Poles from the Polish Resettlement Corps on the transfer to civilian status. It has continued as an industrial hostel with Polish residents numbering more than half the total. The 130 residents are employed locally but it is a costly business and it will shortly be closed. Many of those displaced will

probably find lodgings with other Polish workers who have homes in the neighbourhood. 54 12 15 [4.10]

1955

In 1955 140 Cambridge army reservists in the 629 Light Ack-Ack Royal Artillery (TA) Regiment volunteered to jump out of an aeroplane. They became the 629 Parachute Light Regiment (TA), one of the best squads in the country. Amongst their ranks was Col Peter Storey-Pugh who'd escaped from Colditz and Col John Beckett who'd been captured by the Japanese in Singapore. But 18 months later the MOD reviewed its strategy and the men returned to infantry duties. There were no deaths during the regiment's brief history and only a few injuries. Now the Cambridge Parachute Regimental Association is seeking more members. 87 06 12e

1955 01 06

Nearly 50 strangely-clad figures could be seen in gas masks and yellow capes at the University Laboratories in Pembroke Street. All were highly qualified chemists and scientists, members of the Civil Defence Corps receiving instruction in a mobile gas chamber where paralysing nerve gas was sprayed on them and they made various tests, fully protected by special protective clothing. Unprotected persons would be sick and the gas would cause blindness. They also received instruction in atomic warfare and chemistry – 55 01 06

1955 01 11

Mustard gas exploded at Lord's Bridge RAF station after fire broke out in a hangar. The gas, left over from the last war, was being used for experimental purposes. It was being disposed of gradually with the last 125 tons stored in a sunken concrete container. An area was cordoned off and fire tenders were quickly in attendance. It is anticipated that the fire would have destroyed any effects of the gas but medical authorities warned local civilians that if they suffered any reddening of the skin they could obtain immediate medical attention from the RAF. – 55 01 11

1955 04 29

No. 7963 is the number which Mrs Claudette Kennedy of Eltisley Avenue, Cambridge will always bear as a reminder of four terrible years spent in the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. At this camp alone four million people died. She survived because of her knowledge of biology and was put to work in a large synthetic rubber factory, extracting rubber from dandelions. She escaped after guards took fright at the advancing allied armies and made her way to Paris where she was reunited with her small son. After the war she came to Cambridge for an International conference on biochemistry where she met her husband 55 04 29a & b

1955 05 03

Cambridge University Officers Training Corps is to have a wing of the Women's Royal Army Corps with most of the recruits coming from Girton, Newnham and New Hall. All work would come after the prior claims of their courses and no decisive steps would be taken until after they have graduated. The main object would be to produce good officers but driving, vehicle maintenance, radio and photographic interpretation may also be available. However large the numbers it will have to face a considerable drain on the 'marriage market' 55 05 03a

1955 06 28

Officers of Cambridge Home Guard were told that the county had a good chance of surviving the dropping of a hydrogen bomb as it did not present a target worth the expense of such a bomb. But it would undoubtedly be cut off from the rest of the country so it was important they have Civil Defence in addition to small arms training 55 06 28

1955 07 02

Air raid sirens tested – 55 07 02, 55 07 07 [2.7]

1955 07 07

Operation 'Air raid siren' went off without a hitch in Cambridge. In the underground control room at the Guildhall the Civil Defence controller threw the switch which started the well-known high-pitch whine of the 'All Clear' from ten sirens across the district. All schoolchildren, hospitals and public bodies had been warned but one or two people looked skyward and said it was 'Just like old times'. Home Office rulings prevent the testing of the wail of the warning for fear of upsetting people. 55 07 07a

1955 08 04

Men of the 629 Airborne Light Regiment R.A.T.A., formerly known as the "Cambridgeshires", have completed their first parachute training course. In just two weeks the men who come from all walks of life have been transformed into fully-fledged parachutists and 140 of the volunteers will receive their wings. They include Captain L.S. Brown who as headmaster of the Chesterton School had decided to set the boys an example. But he landed awkwardly and became a visitor to the therapy centre for treatment. 55 08 04a

1955 08 30

Wings Day gave a memorable send-off to the 629 (Cambridgeshire) Parachute Light Regiment R.A. (T.A.) regiment in its new role. The first presentation was to its Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col. J.G.A. Beckett whilst Major J.H. Sanders, at the age of 52, completed the course along with his younger colleagues. Thirty of the new parachutists will stage a mock attack at Duxford on Battle of Britain Sunday. 55 08 30 & a

1955 09 26

One glance at Midsummer Common, Cambridge was enough to dispel any suggestion of public apathy about Civil Defence. Hundreds of blue-uniformed figures took part in the finals of 'Exercise Challenge'. It tested their skill and knowledge and rescue teams had the difficult task of retrieving a severely-injured casualty on a stretcher while a stream of 'distressed' people were treated at a rest centre. 55 09 26a, 55 10 01 [2.8,1.7]

1955 11 02

Guildhall Roll of Honour unveiled – 55 11 02 [4.11]

1956 01 05

A practice bomb, inadvertently released from an American B47 bomber, fell in a ploughed field near Newport and buried itself in a crater 15 feet deep and 20 feet wide. It caused hundreds of pounds worth of damage to Biggs' nurseries; one man was wounded when sheets of glass were blown out and five other men ran clear. The crater was surrounded by large sheets of metal which was burned and twisted and scattered over a wide area. A lorry-load of RAF men wearing bow ties and white gloves with Wellington boots collected the fragments and men with picks and shovels removed a large container from the bottom of the crater. 56 01 05

1956 01 30

The last assembly of the Cambridgeshire Home Guard Battalion in uniform was a farewell dinner. They were not being disbanded but were going into reserve as tension had slackened. Should an emergency arise they were the right men to form a nucleus of a strong body which would spring into being. The battalion flag was handed into the custody of the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. E.C. Parker to be guarded faithfully until once again it flew over their headquarters. 56 01 30

1956 02 14

Cambridgeshire regiment history and future – 56 02 14 & a

1956 03 06

A captive balloon will be used for parachute jumping at Trumpington. Although intended primarily for members of the University Parachute Club, 50 'chutes have been allotted to the Cambridgeshire

Regiment Parachute Light Regiment. All men now have a reserve parachute strapped to his middle as a second line of defence 56 03 06e

1956 03 20

Civil Defence welfare teams staged a Food Flying Squad Emergency Feeding demonstration. Each squad is a self-contained mobile motorised unit capable of turning out 4,000 meals at one cooking. The Cambridge unit set up an emergency kitchen to feed visitors. It was well worth queuing for: a hot and sustaining stew of meat, vegetables and potatoes followed by steamed suet pudding. 56 03 20b & c

1956 03 29

Waterbeach airfield to receive standard, history 56 squadron 56 03 29

1956 04 28

The Duchess of Kent visited RAF Waterbeach to present it with its Standard, the greatest honour to be bestowed on 56 Fighter Squadron in its lengthy history. It is awarded only to squadrons of 25 years' standing or with a history of special outstanding operations. Afterwards she had difficulty signing the visitors' book because of cold fingers; the signature looks a little indistinct and shaky 56 04 28a

1956 05 05

Britain is on the brink of war. Enemy forces are massed against us and it appears only a matter of hours that the first attack of World War Three will come. Although the man in the street is unaware of it the Army and Civil Defence are taking part in the biggest defence exercise the world has yet seen. It envisages evacuation of 800,000 people from London and authorities have joined together in the war room at Brooklands Avenue to assess the situation 56 05 05a

1956 05 25

Through winding country lanes, townspeople and rural folk went to Ely for the opening of the first two-day county show for 50 years. As they travelled they passed fields of growing crops urgently in need of rain. The show has a reputation for being one of the finest in the agricultural calendar but had become so vast that visitors have found it difficult to take in all aspects. Now they have much more time and over 20,000 visitors attended the second day - 56 05 25b, 56 05 28a, 56 05 28b – Territorial army

1956 06 26

The National Hospital Service Reserve competition for mobile first-aid units was held on the City Football Ground. It trains men and women to deal with the emergencies of everyday life and in wartime provide an immediate medical service in the field for walking casualties, relieving pressure on the hospitals. It has over 43,000 members 56 06 26

1956 07 17

Distinguished statesmen gathered at the Madingley American Cemetery for the dedication of the outstandingly beautiful chapel. There were messages from the Queen and President Eisenhower whose wife was amongst the guests. Air Chief Marshal 'Bomber' Harris said it marked the centre of the area from which American bombing planes operated during the war. Nearly 90,000 American Servicemen who lost their lives had been commemorated by the chapel. 56 07 17 & a

1956 08 21

When the Suez crisis threw the country into turmoil it meant there were no Regular Army personnel to assist the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force. Their annual camp was cancelled but instead 200 boys moved into the Coldham's Lane Territorial Training Centre. They had to beg, borrow or steal all sort of equipment but a full programme of training was carried out with shooting on the Barton Road range and trips around the colleges 56 08 21

1956 10 23

The Cambridgeshires had their first test as an infantry battalion; now no longer airborne gunners they joined other units of the 54th East Anglian Division in an exercise on the Stanford battle area. They practised the carriage of weapons, camouflage of vehicles, messing arrangements and sleeping in the open – though most were in action continuously. Sergeant Roff experienced field cooking for the first time but provided three excellent meals. 56 10 23d

1956 10 30

The 162nd Field Ambulance is one of the oldest in the British Army and served with distinction in both World Wars. At one time it was the only medical unit in this part of East Anglia and in the future it would be of the greatest importance in Civil Defence at time of disaster. It has now been adopted by the City of Cambridge and the Mayor presented a plaque to commemorate the occasion. 56 10 30a

1956 11 05

An American newspaper, the 'Omaha World-Herald' has reported that after a B-47 bomber crashed at Lakenheath RAF station in 1956 flaming fuel pouring from the ruptured tanks engulfed a building containing three nuclear bombs. If they had exploded radioactive material would have been showered over a large area. But a major accident was averted when the base Fire Chief ignored the burning bomber and its four-man crew and concentrated on dousing the flames surrounding the nuclear storage building. The incident was kept secret, as the British people had not been told that nuclear bombs were being kept in the U.K. - 79 11 05

1956 12 15

The County Council intend to clear all the hutments, service camps, Nissen huts and disused storage depots – relics of the late war – "as soon as possible". They hope that the time will come when the scene will relate to its pre-war standard. Fifteen service airfields and numerous military depots were established; some had already been dismantled and others taken over to alleviate the housing shortage with 247 huts currently occupied as dwellings. 56 12 15

1957 01 26

Cambridge Civil Defence ambulance section carried out a successful exercise in rendering first aid to the injured. It was assumed a serious railway accident had taken place near the Eastern Gas Board sidings in Coldham's Lane. Casualties were evacuated to Swann's Yard Civil Defence Rescue Site where the Hospital Nursing Mobile First Aid Unit, under Dr C. Attwood, set up a Receiving Centre. 57 01 26

1957 03 05

When the Singapore Memorial was unveiled in the Kranji War Cemetery a wreath was laid in memory of over 370 former members of the Cambridgeshire Regiment who perished during the Malayan campaign or in subsequent captivity. After the formal ceremony, when the Guard of Honour had marched away, the relatives laid their personal wreaths and found the names which they had made their pilgrimage to see. 57 03 05a [4.12]

1957 03 22

US jeep heading high explosives convoy crashes with ambulance – 57 03 22

1957 04 02

Bandmaster A.E. Tucker took the post on joining the Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1922, serving to the outbreak of War. He was taken prisoner in Singapore where he maintained the regimental records and was able to bring home a complete list of the casualties. Discharged in 1946 he assisted in the band and was re-appointed bandmaster in 1954. It is a record of which he must be justly proud. His successor is Mr G.R. Ball, Music Master at Ely King's School. 57 04 02

1957 06 26

United States servicemen contributed £3,500 to the University Department of Pathology in thanks for the specialised laboratory services provided to their military medical authorities. The American hospital at Wimpole Park, which re-opened in 1952, had only limited facilities but Sir Lionel Whitby had offered what professional help they required until his death last year. It was a voluntary contribution from all branches of their personnel and not an attempt to 'pay an account' 57 06 26

1957 09 04

The Cambridge Dunkirk Veteran's Association held their inaugural meeting at the 'Hopbine' in Fair Street. The evacuation bought out the best in all three services in adversity but they should remember those who died on the beachheads. Close on 40 members are expected to join and it is hoped their name will soon command the same respect as that enjoyed by the Old Contemptibles who are now very old. 57 09 04a

1957 09 30

Hundreds of Civil Defence workers moved in on a devastated Cambridge which had been the target of an atomic guided missile. The southern part of the city was devastated as far as the River Cam. The streets were a blazing inferno, heavy dust and smoke swirled everywhere; thousands were rendered homeless with injured victims lifted from the ruins and ferried across the river to safety. Thankfully it was only an exercise. 57 09 30 c & d [2.12]

1958 04 08

About 30 Cambridge people were at Aldermaston on Easter Monday for the rally protesting against the use of nuclear weapons. Seven car loads joined the final stage of the march to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. Amongst them was Robert Davies, the Labour Party prospective Parliamentary candidate and city councillors Reilly, Warren and Ash 58 04 08b

1958 04 09

CND march memories – 58 04 09a

1958 06 10

Cambridgeshire Regiment's band – March Railway Band mass enlistment – 58 06 10

1958 07 07

Territorial Army 50th years – 58 07 07a

1958 07 10

CND protest march to Mepal planned – 58 07 10

1958 08 22

Nearly 300 people took part in a six mile march from Ely to a rocket base at Mepal. Young or old, MP, clerk or labourer, all had one purpose - to denounce the Government's decision to establish rocket sites. Labour candidate Robert Davies said it was absurd to make a secret of where the bases are. Rocket hide-outs are open secrets. You may not be able to mention them but you can go and see where they are. But MP Major Harry Legge-Bourke said it was running very close to official secrets and nobody knows what Mepal might be used for 58 08 22b, 58 08 25 & a [2.14,2.20,2.21]

1958 08 22

A portable short-range guided missile intended to be used against armoured vehicles has been produced by Pye Limited. It incorporates rocket motors with a new jet steerage system and is guided to its target by thin wires which carry signals from a controller's "joystick". It can be fitted with periscopic binoculars which switch from low to high-powered magnification as the missile travels away from the launcher. Many successful test firings have taken place and it can go into production on receipt of orders. 58 08 22c

1958 09 12

Attendance was very poor indeed at a meeting called to hear how women could take measures in their own households to protect families in the event of nuclear war. The WVS had invited 130 women, but only nine turned up. However the three speakers explained how to shelter from the atom bomb's heat flash and how the thick whitewashing of windows could stop penetration of radio-active dust. 58 09 12

1958 10 03

There were cries of 'shame' when Peter Cadogan of Cambridge told the Labour Party Conference that since a march from Ely to the rocket base near Mepal, Americans alarmed by the demonstration had 'given certain English employees to understand that if they want to hold their jobs they cannot be members of the Labour Party'. It was apparent that the marchers had the company of the American F.B.I.: English people demonstrating on English soil were under the hostile surveillance of the secret service of a foreign power. One man, the organiser of the march, had already resigned. 58 10 03

1959 01 13

CND exhibition – 59 01 13

1959 02 12

The United States Air Force hospital located at Wimpole Hall will move to RAF stations at Mildenhall and Lakenheath later this year. The move will affect 300 US military personnel and 95 UK civilians. The facilities are on private land and this has to be handed back to the owner by the end of 1959. They were constructed by the British Ministry of Works in 1943 and operated by the US Army until 1945. In 1951 the 7510th USAF Hospital was stationed there. 59 02 12

1959 04 16

Looking like a gigantic cigar, a tarpaulin-covered 'Thor' rocket – minus its warhead of course – passed through Ely en route to the Mepal rocket base. The 90-foot transporter with pilot drivers at the rear to ensure negotiation of the highway, was escorted by the R.A.F. police. Preceding it, to clear the streets of all other traffic, were civil police. The 'Thor', produced in America, has a range of at least 1,500 miles 59 04 16a

1959 04 21

Territorial Army training, Coldham's Lane – 59 04 21 & a

1959 06 05

Currently undergoing training at the Thor Intermediate Range Guided Missile School operated by the USAF in Tucson, Arizona, is Chief Technician Robert Fennell, whose wife lives in Tenison Avenue. He is one of a number of RAF personnel being trained in all phases of maintenance of the 1,500-mile range missiles to be based at Thor launching sites such as the one at Mepal. 59 06 05

1959 06 08

A procession 300 yards long wound its way through the crowded shopping streets of Cambridge to see Sir Hamilton Kerr MP and request that Britain should stop testing the H-bomb. The Cambridge Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which has nearly 500 members (not including undergraduates), toured the streets with posters summoning people to a rally on Midsummer Common. It was one of the biggest open-air demonstrations in recent times. There was only one interruption when Mr Colin Bell was greeted with a perfunctory and disintegrating orange as he stepped to the microphone. It was thrown by an undergraduate. 59 06 08

1959 07 23

Arthur Tucker, Secretary of the Cambridgeshire Regiment Old Comrades Association, carried the Cambridgeshire's roll of honour up the nave of Ely Cathedral at the dedication ceremony. Through his years of internment at Changhi Prison in Singapore he had kept a little book under the floorboards containing the names of all the men in the 2nd Battalion and any casualties. Had it been found it would

have meant his instant death. He used it to correct the list compiled by the War Office – half the chaps they had named were very much alive. 59 07 23b

1959 09 14

Nuclear Disarmament Week - J.B. Priestly attends – 59 09 14 [2.24]

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 02 02

Civil Defence HQ opens Warkworth Terrace – 60 02 02, 60 02 13 [2.26]

1960 02 12

The RAF strategic Thor missile is now operational at Feltwell, one of four bases capable of launching rockets with nuclear warheads. There are three Thor missiles housed horizontally in special shelters with 12 more in 'satellite' emplacements nearby and three more complexes in the eastern part of England which the authorities are reluctant to name. It takes an hour to attach a warhead after which it can be erected, fuelled and launched in 15 minutes. The rocket would take 15 minutes to reach a target in Russia. 60 02 12a & b

1960 03 11

MP Major Legge-Bourke spoke of the rocket base at Mepal. It had a higher proportion of NCOs as against other ranks. There were plenty of first class warrant officers but practically no ordinary aircraft men. There was only one on the base when he visited. He felt very sorry for the fellow surrounded by so many stripes. The Under-Secretary of State agreed: he had never seen so many sergeants in one place in his whole life. If all bases were as cold and constituencies as cold as the Isle of Ely then he was sorry for the young chaps who have to stay there day and night looking after the installations. But morale was extremely high. 60 03 11a

1960 04 06

In April 1939 a Cambridge squadron of the Air Defence Cadet Corps was formed. It soon had three flights of 25 cadets with more on the waiting list. They all bought their own uniforms and paid three pence a week towards the upkeep of the Squadron. In 1941 it became the Air Training Corps. It now has nearly 100 cadets commanded by Flt/Lt Donald Snazle who joined on its formation and served as a bomb aimer during the war 60 04 06b

1960 05 27

Some 1,800 military and civilian personnel are working at the US base at Mildenhall and there are ample facilities for them. It is unusual not to see at least one game of baseball in progress with volleyball and horseshoes also popular. The religious life is catered for in a 'universal' chapel and they are also encouraged to worship in British churches and chapels. There is a dance almost every weekend and a weekly floor show in which British and American stars appear. Most of the American children go to a school on the USAF base at Lakenheath and the wives have their own social clubs. 60 05 27a

1960 06 20

A hundred years of volunteer soldiering in Cambridgeshire was marked by a stirring parade and drum head service on Parker's Piece. The First Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment was joined by two other organisations also celebrating their centenary - the Army Cadet Force and the Combined Cadet Force. The Colours were ceremonially paraded and the Regimental band accompanied the hymns. Afterwards the Commanding Officer (Lieut-Col P.D. Storie-Pugh) led his men to their headquarters in East Road as people demonstrated their pride in the Cambridgeshires - 60 06 20 [2.28,5.1,5.2]

1960 09 09

Just a year ago the USAF base at RAF Alconbury became the headquarters of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and nearly 7,000 Americans moved in. The station has its own bank and post

office, a barber and beauty parlour, a laundry and motor maintenance department as well as a dispensary, food stores and clothes shop. There is a bowling alley, soccer and baseball pitches. A cinema, hobby shop and community centre provide off-duty means of entertainment, there is a well-stocked library and a base chapel. Houses include all the latest amenities with refrigerators, washing and drying machines, sink units and electric cookers. 60 09 09d e f

1960 12 09

Five incendiary and three practice bombs were recently unearthed during digging operations at Mepal airfield, a few hundred yards from the main entrance to one of East Anglia's Thor rocket bases. It brings the total find during the three weeks in which an RAF Feltwell bomb disposal squad has been at work up to 18 bombs or Mills markers. In addition about 200 other miscellaneous items of an explosive nature have been discovered, mostly bullets. The rocket base was not in danger at any time: the biggest threat would have been death to any person in the immediate vicinity should the bombs have exploded 60 12 09b

1961 02 22

Boys of two Army Cadet Battalion learned their drills the hard way when their machine guns jammed right in the middle of an enemy attack. Later a tremendous assault was launched upon a tree-filled quarry defended by resolute Bren gunners from Whittlesey. Smoke hit the attackers from their objective as they struggled through the bushes and undergrowth while the air was filled with the noise of loud explosions and the clatter and crack of rifle fire. Afterwards everyone returned to the Barrington Training Centre for lunch— 61 02 22b

1961 04 01

Nearly 200 people from Cambridge people set out on the Wethersfield to London Ban-the-Bomb march. They joined eighteen hundred marchers who had stayed overnight near Finchingfield where the two-mile long column assembled on the tiny village green. Amongst them was 85 year old Clara Rackham who was on her fourth march and hoped to walk to Braintree. Her only luggage was a straw bag containing a flask and sandwiches. The well-known marchers, the Baker family from Harston took six of their seven children, leaving their four-year-old daughter at home. Mr Robert Davies, who contested the Cambridgeshire by-election recently, was also on the march. He intends to walk all the way 61 04 01a

1961 04 07

The Food Flying Squad Convoys of the Ministry of Agriculture were started during the war under the name of the Queen's Messenger Convoys. They were reformed when the need for Civil Defence became more acute and consist of four canteen vans, two stores vans, a water carrier and a staff van. They are manned by the W.V.S. and are capable of providing 3-4,000 light meals of soup and stew. They can respond to a call following an enemy attack or civil disaster and did much useful working during the East Coast floods. 61 04 07a

1961 09 08

Members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Territorial Association are examining aerial photographs at the new Air Photo Interpretation Centre at the Drill Hall in East Road. Until April they were a Motor Transport Company and when reorganised were divided into two sections with the other studying signals at Coldham's Lane. The women have to sign on for two years and receive full army pay with an annual bounty of ten guineas. Uniforms are given and they train each Monday evening. But it is difficult if there are small children for in wartime the T.A. are the first to be called up. 61 09 08b

1961 09 13

Lord Bertrand Russell, leader of the Committee of 100, began a seven-day prison sentence after a civil disobedience campaign. Overnight Cambridge supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament went out with paint pots and daubed slogans saying 'Free Russell' on the wall of Emmanuel College and on footpaths in front of Sidney Sussex and Trinity. Councillor Robert Davies,

a member of CND, said they did not support the defacing of buildings but it was an indication of the depth of feeling against the imprisonment of an aged and respected philosopher 61 09 13 [5.6]

1961 09 13

The Army Emergency Reserve has not enjoyed the limelight of other Territorial Army units. Its training obligations are not so onerous and the bounty much higher, at £75. But volunteers are liable to immediate recall for service in any part of the world, as happened during the Suez crisis. The local unit, 215 Port Workshop, is drawn from the Cambridge, Newmarket, Norwich and Ipswich area under its Commanding Officer, Captain C. Wilson of Harston. All the personnel are tradesmen; in action they would follow the assault infantry in to keep the beaches clear and traffic moving 61 09 13a

1962 01 03

G.J. Rogers record of unbroken 34 years' service in Corps of Royal Engineers – 62 01 03

1962 03 05

Unexploded bombs have been found in Cambridge for the second time within a week. Two were discovered by Mr Norman Summers when he was digging over a piece of waste ground at the rear of his council house in Peverel Close. Bomb disposal experts think they may date back to the beginning of the First World War. They were destroyed on the beach at Mundesley. It was the first time the land had been dug: previously it was just waste ground where children played occasionally. Last week gardeners at Grange Court found an unexploded 12lb practice bomb in the bottom of the hedge. 62 03 05

1962 04 11

The Isle of Ely has been classified as a 'neutral area' in the Government's scheme for the dispersal of the public in the event of a national emergency. This means one out of which no planned movement was to be considered. 62 04 11a

1962 04 21

CND column of vehicles tour bases to Mepal etc – 62 04 21

1962 04 28

East Anglian CND Committee of 100 break off march from Parkers Piece to Brooklands Avenue, distribute leaflets – 62 04 29 [2.31]

1962 04 30

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's mock funeral march through the centre of Cambridge caused traffic congestion, provoked an anti-CND march and met with a noisy reception from undergraduates in the Market Square. The 'funeral cortege' stretched for 300 yards behind a child's coffin carried by two pall bearers. Altogether 400 'mourners' took part in the march including Mr Gabor Cossa, the antique dealer. A Committee of 100 contingent joined in a demonstration at the Government buildings in Brooklands Avenue 62 04 30a

1962 07 05

Abberley House, Gt Shelford is the HQ of the county Civil Defence Corps. In a nuclear war Wardens would give advice, Communications and Intelligence sections control operations and Scientists go out after an attack to collect technical information. First aiders would supplement the ambulance service, Rescue workers free trapped survivors while Welfare staff would provide food, shelter and clothing. Members of the C.D. are only asked to give as much time as they can spare and more volunteers are needed. 62 07 05c

1962 10 24

A crowd of 5,000 people, mainly students, swarmed through Cambridge after police and Proctors stopped a political protest rally about the American-Cuban crisis on the Market Square. Carrying placards declaring 'Hands Off Cuba' they made their way to Parker's Piece where the meeting got

under way with speakers both supporting and opposing President Kennedy's moves. One warned 'We are on the verge of a nuclear war'. Later police prevented another rally outside the Guildhall where demonstrators hammered on the side of passing buses. 62 10 24 [2.32,5.7]

1962 10 29

More than 200 people joined in the 'No War over Cuba' march around Cambridge led by Robert Davies, the Prospective Labour Party Candidate. They were mostly students but included 87-year-old Mrs Clara Rackham, 87. Four undergraduates carrying placards saying 'Hands off Cuba' distributed leaflets to the thousands of spectators streaming into the City Football ground on Milton Road. Members of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, who were meeting to discuss safety in the building industry, petitioned Mr Gaitskell and the TUC over the moves made by President Kennedy 62 10 29

1962 12 10

An all-night vigil by CND members at the USAF airbase at Wethersfield near Saffron Walden was partly cancelled due to rain squalls and cold conditions. A mobile canteen which had been arranged to supply refreshments to the demonstrators did arrive but stood unused. However next day a public meeting was held on Wethersfield village green which was addressed by a member of the Committee of 100 before protestors marched to the base which is home to the 29th Tactical Fighter Wing flying Super Sabre fighter bombers 62 12 10

1962 12 11

The Thor missile base at Ely is to be closed and the war-time airfield will be disposed of. The Air Ministry says there are no civilians working on the base, which is a satellite station for Feltwell missile base, and had three Thor rockets which cost £1 million each. There have been two protest marches in the 1958 & 1961. The first in 1958 was organised by Cambridge City Labour Party, the second during an East Anglian CND campaign 62 12 11

1963 01 15

East Anglian CND Conference – 68 01 15 [2.33]

1963 02 26

Freedom of City granted to Suffolk & Cambridgeshire Regiment TA – 63 02 26 [5.3]

1963 04 18

"Spies for Peace" pamphlets describe 'Regional centre of Government' at Brooklands Avenue – 62 04 18 [5.8]

1963 05 08

Corpus Christi cellars could be used as fall-out shelter in times of emergency – 63 05 08

1963 09 20

The 5,000 m.p.h. rocket missiles which once stood on remote sites such as Mepal airfield are being returned to the United States. Some have already gone back stripped of their war-heads and fuel propellants, chained inside the cavernous interiors of the giant C-133 transport aircraft. The rockets are to be used for space research and training programmes. They caused a political uproar when they arrived in this country ready for erection on their launching sites. 63 09 20c

1963 11 14

Cambridge University Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament will keep the public informed of the progress of their 'Fallex 63' exercise by posting large newspapers at three points in the city centre. They will include details of how a supposed 'nuclear war' is raging across Europe with maps of nuclear fall-out. The railway station will be picketed where it will be assumed that all main services have been immobilised. Most activities will take place in the city centre and around the housing estates where short public meetings will be held. 63 11 14 [369.21.15]

1963 11 25

Technical equipment from Britain's obsolete rocket bases is on view at some of the ex-Thor missile sites. One of the largest was at Mepal airfield which was closed down as an operational station during the summer and is now manned by maintenance staff. The stores and plant will be sold by auction but items such as the count-down and launch control caravans have been 'demilitarised' to ensure they cannot be used by an enemy. Practically all that is missing are the giant Thor rockets themselves which have gone back to America for space research 63 11 25, pic 63 11 27a

1964 02 10

Recruits for Cambridge City Civil Defence are drawn from a wide and diverse field. Amongst the 575 on strength at the Warkworth Lodge headquarters there is a 55-year-old University professor and a 20-year-old farm labourer. Other volunteers include an optician, compositor, school teacher, window cleaner, scientist and housewife. The Mayor and Mayoress, Mr & Mrs J.B. Collins both hold the civil defence medal for long service. "Somebody has got to be available to pick up the pieces and start again. In the event of nuclear warfare we would try and care for survivors", one said. 64 02 10

1964 03 20

The new HQ of Cambridge A.T.C. Squadron is the former Royal Observer Corps base on Newmarket Road. When the Squadron was first formed as a unit of the Air Defence Cadet Corps its members attended lectures at the University Engineering Laboratories before moving early in the war to Leighton House in Trumpington Road. But most of its time has been spent at "Rock Mill" in Rathmore Road. 64 03 20 [Misc.4.2]

1964 05 13

The United States Air Force 10th Tactical Wing based at Alconbury, is ready 24 hours a day to fly to targets in Europe. But their RB-66B aircraft carry cameras, not bombs, and targets are only strafed with fire canisters to illuminate the ground many thousands of feet below providing pictorial evidence of military build up or bridges. The planes are packed with electronic aids, important to penetrate strongly defended areas. On returning the nine-inch wide film is developed in seven minutes and examined while still wet. 64 05 13

1964 05 23

RAF Alconbury – feature on the USAF base – 64 05 23

1964 09 25

Cambridgeshire's 19 wartime airfields are falling into disuse or being reclaimed as farm land. Weed-choked runways, derelict barracks and tumbledown conning towers are all that is left. At Duxford the concrete baffles have been demolished and its runways are disappearing with the rubble being used for housing and road building. Waterbeach had a succession of Vikings and Vampires aircraft but now it is mainly trainers that take off. At Bottisham many of the buildings are used for storing grain. But Mepal, which recently had a Thor missile base, is now in the hands of the Americans – 64 09 25c

1964 10 01

Fen Drayton had to be evacuated following a nuclear explosion near Wisbech. There was no damage from the blast but because of radiation fall-out more than 200 people were moved to Civil Defence Headquarters at Gt Shelford. The last person to leave each house put a white towel in the window to indicate the house had been cleared. Police patrolled the village to prevent looting. But shopkeepers were worried about the loss of trade and some farmers were too busy to go. It was only an exercise to test plans in case of the real thing. 64 10 01a, 05a

1964 10 05

Following the explosion of a nuclear bomb Cambridgeshire Civil Defence workers quickly evacuated men, women and children threatened by radiation from Fen Drayton. And then the 'accident' happened. A car with six occupants crashed into a ditch as part of a dummy accident to supplement

their exercise. An ambulance was immediately despatched but it was involved in a real crash with a bus. As a result the 'victims' in their theatrical make-up had to wait for 40 minutes. Even then they could not be moved as the first-aid team failed to arrive. 64 10 05a

1966 04 05

CND demonstrate over Vietnam war – photo – 66 04 05

1965 06 07

"Peace in Vietnam" banner at Kings – 65 06 07[369.22.2]

1966 12

Cambs & Isle Territorial & Auxiliary Forces Association (probably) final parade [4.2]

1967 03 20

Cambridgeshire Regiment changes with reorganisation Territorial Army, to be a military force to assist police in law and order and act in support in event of nuclear attack ; history – 67 03 20, 20a

1967 04 15

US ambassador in Vietnam protest 67 04 15 [369.22.5]

1968 02 26

Vietnam marchers 68 02 26 [3.8]

1972 09 08

Just in case The Bomb should ever drop, eight powerful new air raid warning sirens are to be installed in Cambridgeshire. Although few people ever see or hear them, the Home Office has about 22,000 warning points in the United Kingdom equipped with electric or hand sirens for air attack warnings and maroons for fall-out warnings. Now they are to be replaced by powerful compressed-air sirens which are much more efficient and much louder. The eight which are to be installed in Cambridgeshire will be at Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, Waterbeach Barracks, Oakington airfield, Great Wilbraham, the old Duxford airfield, Bassingbourn Barracks Lt Eversden & Linton - 72 09 08

1973 07 07

Hundreds of tons of high explosives are driven through Cambridge every week on open-backed unmarked lorries. This was revealed yesterday after one of the lorries burst a tyre on Huntingdon Road, a mile from the spot where 48 hours earlier a drum of deadly poison fell off a lorry and burst. The high explosives come through Cambridge en route from Felixstowe docks to an ammunition manufacturer at Grantham. Dozens of unmarked lorries pass through Cambridge every week to 10 days carrying the explosives. Many then return to Felixstowe carrying the finished product, various types of ammunition for export abroad - 73 07 07

1974 08 23

A convoy of lorries carrying 50 one-ton bombs to an American air base were diverted on to the half-built Newmarket by-pass last night when some of the loads were found to have shifted dangerously. Explosive experts examined the bombs for damage before they were reloaded by a crane brought from USAF Lakenheath. The scare lasted for five hours and involved dozens of firemen, police and American military personnel. An atmosphere of secrecy surrounded the incident from its beginning near the railway crossing on the A11 at Six Mile Bottom. Military explosive shipments are on Cambridgeshire roads every day without police escort, and without information being given to the fire service - 74 08 23

1974 10 28

Tourists at Cambridge colleges found themselves caught up in one of the largest security operations mounted in the University in recent years. It followed a message passed on by the Metropolitan police that there could be a bomb explosion at a college within 48 hours. As a result tourists carrying parcels

were stopped by porters. Many central colleges locked their chapels and halls altogether. Last week bombs exploded in a London club and at Harrow school - 74 10 28

1975

Old Contemptibles Association Cambridge branch wound up [455.9.2]

1976 03 02

Cambridge's last links with serving members of the Royal Navy will be officially severed next week when the Royal Naval Unit in Porson Road closes. It has been involved in providing 'guinea-pigs' for psychological tests at the Medical Research Council Applied Psychology Unit in Chaucer Road. Sailors from many parts of Britain have come to Cambridge to take part in the tests. The Cambridge unit first opened in 1945 at Parkside and moved to Porson Road in 1951. Research centred on the effects of hot and humid atmospheric conditions – heat stress – upon work - 76 03 02

1976 06 03

The Royal Observer Corps posts, about one every 15 miles, are concrete bunkers buried deep in the ground. They are proof against radiation and a moderate amount of blast. If the radiation levels are intense the observers must be prepared to stay at their post for long periods, in total isolation. Should the very worst occur and the post find itself totally cut off with radiation reaching dangerous levels they could warn those residents above ground by operating their portable siren - 76 06 03

1979 05 02

Freedom of City granted to Royal Anglian Regiment (successors to Cambridgeshire Regiment) 79 05 02 [5.4]

1979 08 22

At the back of the Shire Hall and behind the Sir Isaac Newton pub in Cambridge sits a small, portable office. It houses four dedicated workers who are preparing for nuclear war and other major disasters such as flooding, hurricanes and air crashes. Total nuclear war is a frightening prospect and the Government has taken steps to plan for such a holocaust. Now parish councillors are to be trained as the latest part of the contingency plans; they would act as 'community advisors', helping to bring life back to normal in highly disrupted areas. - 79 08 22

1979 12 05

Cambridge Council Against Missile Bases formed to protest about Cruise - 79 12 05 [5.9]

1980 03 17

More than 2,000 people marched through Cambridge on Saturday to protest at plans to site Cruise missiles in East Anglia. Shoppers watched the protestors, who included political and religious groups such as Quakers and Japanese Buddhist monks. They carried models of a missile and a nuclear submarine. It was the biggest demonstration for years and was followed by a debate between Defence Secretary Francis Pym and prominent peace campaigner Lord Soper. 80 03 17

1980 06 18

John Major, MP, says he regrets the Government's decision to base Cruise missiles at Molesworth, a disused RAF base used by the USAF. It has enough spare land to accommodate the buildings to store the missiles and is close to RAF Alconbury which can house the extra US servicemen. Cruise missiles are mobile weapons designed to be driven away from their bases in time of conflict. The closeness of the improved A604 and A1 was another decisive factor. 80 06 18a

1980 06 18

Molesworth villagers have reacted to the news that Cruise missiles may be stationed at the RAF base. Seven years ago they won a battle to prevent the building of a nuclear power station there and feel they have been picked on because they are a rural area with a scattered population. The landlady of

the Cross Keys said it could bring a lot of much-needed business but was annoying for private individuals who had moved there for peace and quiet. 80 06 18c

1980 06 30

Nearly 2,000 people staged a big anti-missile rally at the disused airfield at Molesworth. It had been originally planned for Lakenheath USAF base but was switched following the announcement that Cruise missiles were to be based there. The news came as a shock to villagers who had fought for years to have the airfield returned to farming use. One is to write to President Carter asking for a £2,000 donation to the village hall fund by way of compensation. 80 06 30c [5.11, 5.14]

1980 07 07

More than 400 people held a peace picnic on Jesus Green organised by Cambridgeshire Council Against Missile Bases. It was opened by the leader of Cambridge City Council who said: It is ironic that there are cuts, left right and centre while we are spending money to kill people. It provided an opportunity to express opposition through peaceful means and included performances by singer Jancis Harvey and a troupe of Chilean refugee dancers. 80 07 07a

1980 07 08

Cambridge's Labour councillors want to take the city out of the Government's national civil defence organisation and ban all council officers from any wartime emergency planning. They say that Cambridge is in danger of becoming a nuclear dustbin & attack the plans to site Cruise missiles at Molesworth. But Conservatives say they are duty-bound to make arrangements to safeguard citizens in the event of a nuclear attack. 80 07 08e

1980 07 08

Villagers worried over the siting of Cruise missiles at Molesworth packed a meeting to fire questions at John Major M.P. He emphasised his support for the missiles and said they were definitely coming unless all countries agreed on disarmament. There would be 64 missiles housed in 16 separate bunkers which would be partly beneath ground. The mounds would be earth covered and grassed over. During exercises convoys of 20 vehicles would take to the road with the mobile missiles and remain away over-night. He doubted whether house prices would be affected. 80 07 08f

1980 07 10

The parishioners of Molesworth were too respectful to ask their M.P., John Major, rude questions about the siting of Cruise missiles. They asked about the by-pass, drainage, sewage and tenders for the bunkers. And one man, after asking about the rateable value of his house said he would like to go back to his children and the milking. Two who dared ask about the visual impact were told the missiles would be grassed over. Perhaps they may be thatched as well? 80 07 10

1980 08 07

Joseph Needham plants tree in memory Hiroshima - 80 08 07 [5.15]

1980 10 01

Bomb disposal experts were called in when a bag containing five shells was found in the Cam at Jesus Green lock. They were taken to the Army's headquarters at Colchester where one of them – a five-inch-long bullet shaped object – was discovered to be a highly-explosive anti-tank shell. The others were solid-shot shells used in the last war from an anti-tank gun. Lock-keeper Allan Brett had spotted a plastic bag in the water, hooked it in and found the shells inside. 80 10 01e

1980 10 27

There was an undignified scramble for seats on the coaches booked by Cambridge Against Missile Bases to take them to the massive CND rally at Hyde Park. A further 150 students left on the Cambridge Peace Action coaches. The decision to base cruise missiles at Molesworth had seen a resurgence of interest in nuclear arms control and several people from Needingworth marched under a 'Hunts Against the Missiles' banner. "It is unlikely to have much influence on the present

government”, said a member of Cambridge Peace Action, “but the Labour Party has adopted a disarmament policy and may do something when they’re in power” 80 10 27

1981 04 01

The Government has given the go-ahead for USAF TR1 spy planes to be stationed at RAF Alconbury by 1983 together with thousands of extra American airmen and their families. Their deployment will involve additional construction work estimated at £40 million and be the biggest boost for the Huntingdonshire economy for many years. This makes Alconbury – the future Command base for Cruise missiles at Molesworth – a vital part of NATO’s defence strategy 81 04 01

1981 05 15

Diggers are ripping up Molesworth airfield and soon there will be rows of grassy mounds like unmarked graves – resting-places for Cruise Missiles. Close to the spot is the road sign to Little Gidding and on it appears two lines from the T.S. Eliot poem of the same name: ‘Dust in the air suspended Marks the place where a story ended’. In the unhappy event of East Anglia being reduced to so much dust the Regional Health Authority has drawn up a war-plan policy. It includes advice on herbal remedies and wearing plastic bags on your head against fall-out. 81 05 15b

1981 06 05

Cambridge was declared a nuclear-free zone by Labour councillors who asked officers to oppose and restrict the deployment of nuclear weapons and the transportation of radioactive material within the city boundaries. Work going on in university departments is beyond the scope of the new policy but any future planning applications for research facilities connected with nuclear weapons would be rejected 81 06 05a

1981 08 14

Simplex agricultural engineers of Sawston have developed a brilliant new nuclear war shelter with potentially great commercial future. It is based on the firm’s silo technology and meets Home Office specifications with space for up to seven people. A basic shelter could sell for £1,500. There are only minor teething problems to sort out, but owing to financial difficulties the firm is closing down. 81 08 14

1981 09 16

A nuclear shelter is being installed in its designer’s home at Ashwell. It provides emergency accommodation for up to seven people and will protect against nuclear blast, radiation, heat, chemical and biological attack with a decontamination chamber, lavatory and space for cooking. You could seal yourself in, live there for the duration and come out when the going is good again. It costs £9,658 but an air filter is extra. 81 09 16c

1981 10 15

The cellar of a rambling Victorian building in Newmarket, used to provide shelter for homeless families, has been converted into an emergency centre to cope with nuclear attack where a team of officials will direct survival operations if war breaks out. But spending cuts mean it has no sophisticated air filtration and drainage systems and is only lined with plasterboard. It was chosen because the council officers were too close to USAF bases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath 81 10 15

1982 10 15

In the basement of Shire Hall is an ‘emergency planning room’ packed with maps, telephones and radio sets. It has windows, thickish walls and a large conference table but would offer virtually no protection from a direct nuclear hit. It is designed to act as a communications network liaising with the emergency services, the water authority, railways and so on during any emergency from floods in Wisbech to the sudden cutting of the county’s gas supplies. 82 10 15 & a

1983 01 20

Labour Party issue leaflet ‘Cambridge & nuclear weapons’ on effect of bombs - 83 01 20 [5.17]

1983 02 12

Plans to move the Cambridge War Memorial from the Hills Road – Station Road junction have been scrapped. Instead of making way for a new system of computer-controlled traffic lights, the memorial will remain as an island. Originally the County Council wanted to relocate it to a small shady spot under the trees in the Botanic Garden, but the City refused to co-operate. 83 02 12a

1983 02 14

American TR1 spyplane for Alconbury – 83 02 14

1983 03 19

The traitor Donald Maclean continued to do some of his shopping in Cambridge long after he defected to Moscow 32 years ago. Maclean, who died in Moscow last week, regularly bought books from Bowes and Bowes, the Cambridge bookseller. Another former Cambridge student and fellow traitor, Kim Philby, also bought many books from the same source. Frank Reeve, the former manager said he hesitated over the first order and checked with the Foreign Office to see whether it was permissible to trade with a traitor 83 03 19 p1 & 9

1983 04 06

Colonel Guennadi Primakov, one of three Russians ordered out of Britain for spying, openly used the Cambridge Lion Yard Library for part of his intelligence-gathering work. He consulted newspaper cuttings files on civil defence in the Cambridgeshire Collection. At that time, in 1980, Defence Secretary Francis Pym, MP for Cambridgeshire, had announced the decision to site Cruise missiles at Molesworth prompting 2,000 opponents of the scheme to march in protest. Librarians noticed him photocopying the files and consulted local police, but they said it was a matter for Scotland Yard - 83 04 06

1984 01 16

The USAF base at Alconbury is to become a Cruise missile assembly site. The missiles will be flown to Alconbury for assembly and transferred to four permanent bunkers at Molesworth. RAF Waterbeach, RAF Feltwell and RAF Upwood are to house 500-bed nuclear war hospital centres. They will renovate existing buildings then mothball them until needed for military casualties of war in Europe 84 01 16 p1

1985 02 06

The Molesworth peace camp was smashed in a massive combined military and police operation masterminded by Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine. They swooped in the dead of night catching almost 200 anti-Cruise missile protesters by surprise while 1,500 soldiers set about erecting a seven-and-a-half-mile fence around the base. Amongst those living at 'Rainbow Fields' were about 25 babies and a woman about to give birth. Police provided fuel to allow some of their vehicles to leave and emergency arrangements were made to provide shelter for women and children who needed it. 85 02 06

1985 05 11

The war-time mustard gas dump at Lord's Bridge is to be investigated by MoD officials for contamination as part of a national investigation of possible hazards on chemical weapons sites. It was one of six sites used as mustard gas dumps and was a forward filling depot for Risely Airfield in Bedfordshire. Two 250 tonne underground tanks containing lethal mustard gas were sunk on the site in 1944. They were emptied in the 1950s, their contents either burned or dumped at sea, and filled with decontaminant. It is now part of the University's Mullard radio telescope observatory and fenced off. 85 05 11

1985 08 06

A peace garden dedicated to the Japanese people who died in the atomic bomb blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was officially opened on Christ's Pieces. But the joint council-CND ceremony, set up as

part of a week of peace programme to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the nuclear raids, was interrupted by protestors and boycotted by Conservative city councillors 85 08 06 [5.18]

1985 09 23

Cambridge soldier killed in Northern Island, buried with full military honours - 85 09 23 [4.4]

1985 10 01

A triple gun salute and the haunting notes of the soldier's requiem 'The Last Post' sounded out across a sunlit Cambridge cemetery after the coffin carrying the body of an 18-year-old private was laid in the ground. Martin Patten had been gunned down by the IRA only three months after starting active service with his beloved Royal Anglian Regiment. Amongst dozens of mourners were soldiers from all three of the Regiment's battalions and members of the Burma Star Association 85 10 01a

1985 12 16

Military convoys allegedly carrying nuclear weapons regularly travel through or close to Cambridge according to 'Polariswatch', a branch of CDN. They say an 11-vehicle convoy travelled along the northern bypass on its way from Scotland to RAF Honington in Norfolk. This is certain to annoy Labour and Liberal city councillors who have fought a long anti-nuclear campaign. They may call together all local peace groups to seek their views on nation-wide moves by local councils to seek a ban on the transportation of radioactive materials 85 12 16

1986 05 08

Territorial Army medic unit formed – 86 05 08a

1986 06 24

Foundation stone new Territorial Army centre, Cherry Hinton – 86 06 24 [4.5]

1986 07 29

An 'exodus' plan has been evolved to save thousands of Cambridge families from the horrors of a nuclear disaster. The aim is to evacuate the entire city if a Chernobyl-style accident happens at the Sizewell reactor complex on the Suffolk coast. Meanwhile health chiefs have been warned they are 'sitting on a time bomb' over the ambulance service crisis. Cuts of up to 20 per cent aim at correcting a budget deficit made worse by a Government blunder. 86 07 29

1987 07 15

Cruise missile launchers and their control vehicles were unveiled at Molesworth airfield. On display behind the eight-and-a-half miles of razor wire were 16 vehicles and two of the men who will 'push the buttons' if there is another war. The missiles are due to arrive next year and will be housed in four bunkers which will be grassed over as part of a landscaping programme that has won a design award. When complete it will be Britain's most secure base. While the base opened its doors to the Press it remained closed for the handful of peace campaigners who maintain a lonely vigil in tents and caravans outside. 87 07 15a

1987 07 21

The Territorial Army has been given a major boost with the building of new headquarters units for the signals and medical units in Cherry Hinton Road. It includes facilities for vehicle maintenance, lecture theatres and a full indoor firing range. Both units have a Nato role, being trained for operational activities with the British Army on the Rhine, and are still recruiting. There is also new accommodation for other sections on the TA site in Coldham's Lane where the previous premises are being demolished. 87 07 21a

1987 10 01

If there was a disaster then a team of 600 community advisers would play their part in civil protection schemes. They are trained to deal with a crisis and help people pull together. They know about local radio hams, residents with expert knowledge and facilities such as wells, buildings which could be

adapted into central feeding areas, make-shift accommodation or hospitals. The advisers, who include doctors, vicars, parish councillors and housewives backed up by 900 volunteers, are part of a civil protection initiative by the County Council. Now a series of 13 evening classes have been set up to train more 87 10 01b

1987 10 22

Staff at the County Council's emergency centre in the grounds of Shire Hall learned a few lessons last week during the hurricane. The bunker has a television but no radio to receive local or national reports. However during the gales the television stations were off the air, so a radio is now to be brought in. The Home Office refused to pay for a fridge, freezer or microwave but these will now be purchased. A generator can provide power for 30 days and water is stored for the same period. The list of those who would use it is secret but would include top council officials, civic leaders and representatives of police, fire and ambulance. 87 10 22

1988 02 22

The Territorial Army staged a massive exercise as 300 soldiers firing blank ammunition brought war to the Cambridge area. Enemy forces were advancing from Haverhill, blowing up bridges on the A45 and imaginary infantrymen were sent to engage them. Countless 'casualties' were ferried by helicopter to the main dressing station at Oakington Barracks where they were treated by volunteers and doctors from Mid Anglia health services. One specialist unit was kept busy appeasing local residents' complaints about disturbances. 88 02 22

1988 06 10

CUOTC HQ opens, £3M TA centre, Coldham's Lane - 88 06 10

1988 09 08

Cruise missiles destined for the nuclear scrapheap are being returned to America as part of the superpowers INF Treaty. They are the first of 18 missiles from Molesworth to leave. British Defence Secretary George Younger acknowledged the great deal of inconvenience suffered by local people. Residents are relieved to see them go – and even happier that peace protestors who have campaigned at the base are going too. 88 09 08, 88 09 09

1988 11 01

The last cruise missile has left the Molesworth American air base. News that the weapons had gone came as a Soviet military team arrived to make a snap inspection; they found only empty hangars. Removing of the 18 missiles, under the INF treaty, has been completed two months ahead of schedule. The last left Molesworth en route for destruction in America on Thursday. It has taken the US less than two months to remove the missiles which were deployed under a year ago 88 11 01b

1989 01 30

Molesworth Cruise Missile base was deactivated in an historic ceremony, the first to be disbanded under the Superpowers' Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty. The 18 nuclear-tipped missiles were all removed last year. Now the storage buildings, which resemble large garages with 70-ton steel and concrete doors may be used as accommodation or storage centres. The Royal Marines band played the ceremony out with the 'Monty Python' theme. – 89 01 30 & 31

1990 05 21

Kim Philby film alleges Charles Broad, Prof of Moral Philosophy at Trinity was the 'Fifth Man' in Cambridge spy ring – 90 05 21a

1990 10 15

John Cairncross named as fifth man in Cambridge spy ring – 90 10 15a

1991 01 18

Plans for expensive civil control centre scrapped; is less threat of nuclear attack and is highly unlikely that any emergency centre, however well protected, would be able to survive in Cambridge – 91 01 18a

1991 02 27

CND protest march against Gulf war – 91 02 27